

March 2 statement from Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health, on new positive cases of COVID-19 in Toronto:

Today, Dr. David Williams, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, provided an update on the novel coronavirus: COVID-19. A total of 10 confirmed cases of COVID-19 has been reported in Toronto in 2020. Two of these people have since recovered from their illness. The remaining eight people are currently recovering in self-isolation and Toronto Public Health is following up with them and their close contacts.

We continue to carefully monitor this situation and encourage residents to stay informed by regularly reviewing credible information sources. Part of our current focus is to identify potential cases of COVID-19, to follow up with these people directly and to identify their close contacts. We use current evidence to assess potential health risk, provide education, further instructions and to reduce the potential of virus spread. We also do this work for measles, mumps, and hepatitis A, and not just for COVID-19.

More countries are reporting cases of COVID-19. Given the global circumstances, we are actively working with the City and our provincial and federal health partners to plan for the potential of local spread. We are working with our local and provincial health system colleagues to set up increased local surveillance systems to quickly identify individuals possibly infected with COVID-19.

I continue to be asked if we would consider recommending postponement of events or limiting places where people gather in large numbers. These are significant measures that must be assessed, evaluated and taken only after we balance preventing the spread of infection with the need for people and communities to function. At this time, we are not recommending these approaches, but examples such as limiting non-essential public gatherings are public health measures that can be used to further protect our community, if our local situation changes.

I have also been asked what actions people can take to prepare themselves if our local situation changes. I think it is helpful to consider the supplies you may need at home if you became unwell with any illness, not just COVID-19. For families, this may mean considering your household needs and how you may address them if someone in your household becomes unwell. Things that people may consider include having supplies on-hand so you do not need to leave home if you become ill, or how to plan childcare needs. If the situation changes, other measures people can consider could include changing their daily routines to reduce their exposure to crowded places.

One of the most important things residents can do to prepare is to stay informed by regularly reviewing credible information sources including our website www.toronto.ca/coronavirus. Residents can also call 416-338-7600, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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